

REMARKS

Applicant requests that claims 22-24 and 27 be canceled and claims 16, 17, 19 and 26 be amended. This leaves only claims 16-19, 21, and 25-26 in the application. Claim 25 was allowed while the other claims were rejected on two newly cited patents. Specifically, claims 16 and 21 were rejected on Maloberti (4,906,137) while all rejected claims 16-19, 21 and 26 were rejected on Brown (5,427,046).

Independent claim 16, as amended, describes the vessel or other floating structure (12, Fig. 1) as floating at the sea surface, and describes the upper portion (54) of the riser support extending at least 15% of the sea height above the sea floor (mentioned on page 5, line 21 of the specification). This reduces the length of expensive flexible hose that is required (mentioned on page 5, lines 25-26).

Maloberti's Fig. 7 shows a seafloor structure that supports a hose part 3d in a curve of controlled radius of curvature, so the free hose part 3d extends in a gentle curve to the vessel. Maloberti's Fig. 1 shows the collar 6 lying at a height of 20% of the sea height. His Fig. 4 shows a tall structure of a height 33 times its hose diameter. Fig. 7 shows a shorter structure of a height that is 12 times its hose diameter, which implies a structure height in Fig. 7 that is about 7% of the sea height. Maloberti is using his sea structure to bend the bottom of his conduit to a desired curvature, and does not indicate that the bent bottom portion has a large height (e.g. at least 15% of sea height) to save hose (he uses a tight bend to save hose).

Brown shows a seafloor riser support 9 having a height (measured to be 9mm) that is 10.3% of the height of the sea (87.5mm). He is using his seafloor riser support to assure that there is a catenary 7 whose lowest point 11 is always above the sea floor. He does not suggest that he is trying to save length of hose by having a seafloor riser support that extends to a large height (e.g. at least 15% of sea height).

Since neither reference mentions or suggests a seafloor riser support height of at least 15% of sea height, applicant believes that amended claim 16 should be allowed. Applicant notes that previous reference van der Graaf does not show a

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rigid seafloor support with the upper portion fixed to the lower one.

Independent claim 26 has been amended to describe the height of the riser upper portion as at least 30% of sea height. For the reasons discussed in connection with claim 16, applicant believes that claim 26 also should be allowed.

In view of the above, entrance of the amendment and reconsideration of the application is courteously requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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